



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant : Paul Mills
Serial No. : 09/728,395
Filed : December 1, 2000
Title : PACKAGING CONTROL WITH TRANSLATION OF COMMAND
PROTOCOLS

Art Unit : 3721
Examiner : John Roger Paradiso

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

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REPLY TO ACTION OF JULY 1, 2003

In reply to the Office Action of July 1, 2003, Applicant submits the following remarks.

I. The Claimed Invention

The invention, as claimed in independent claim 1, relates to automatically packaging a plurality of individual articles into packs at a “packing means,” and collecting the packs together into packaged units, each of which includes a plurality of the packs, at a “means to collect”, e.g., a palletizer. Along the way, individual articles are marked at first marking means; the packs are marked at a second marking means, and the packaged units are marked at a third marking means. There also are first, second and third conveying means for conveying the packs and packaged units, and a control means that controls operation by instructions sent over a data bus using a common computer protocol. Each of the individual first, second and third marking means and the means to collect are connected to the data bus by “respective connecting means,” each of which includes “means to translate data bus commands appropriate to that component into a command protocol which is read by the connected component which responds by performing a productive function, whereby the control means is able to control each of the connected

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